

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SP-02 USIA-15 AID-05 NSC-05 EPG-02 TRSE-00 STR-04
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TAGS: ETRD, IS
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION TO SIGNING OF ANTI-BOYCOTT LAW BY PRESIDENT

REF: (A) STATE 146034, (B) TEL AVIV 792

1. PRESIDENT'S SIGNING OF ANTI-BOYCOTT BILL RECEIVED
WIDE COVERAGE IN ISRAELI PRESS. JERUSALEM POST (BLITZER)
ON JUNE 23 QUOTED WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS AS STATING THAT CERE-
MONY, WHICH WAS OPEN TO PRESS AND LONGER THAN USUAL, WAS
DESIGNED IN PART TO DEMONSTRATE PRESIDENT'S SUPPORT FOR
ISRAEL. ON JUNE 24, SAME PAPER EDITORIALIZED THAT "U.S.
GOVERNMENT HAS EXCEEDED EVERYONE'S EXPECTATIONS BY PASSING
A LAW WHICH FAIRLY AND SQUARELY BANS THE ARAB BOYCOTT."
THIS LEGISLATION AND NEW FRENCH AMENDMENT TO A GENERAL
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION MEASURE "CAN BE SEEN AS BASTIONS IN
THE DEFENSE OF FREE TRADE. THEY DEMONSTRATE MORE CONVINC-
INGLY THAN ANY SCREED OR ORATION THAT PRINCIPLE CAN STILL
COME FIRST AMONG DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES IN DEFENSE OF VESTED
INTERESTS, HOWEVER POWERFUL. SUCH LAWS PROVIDE A WELCOME
SHELTER FOR BUSINESSMEN, WHO CAN NOW IGNORE THE PRES-
SURES AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE ARAB BOYCOTT, WITHOUT SHOW-
ILL-WILL TO THEIR ARAB CUSTOMERS. THE OPPORTUNITY
SHOULD BE TAKEN BY OTHER STATES, LIKE WEST GERMANY AND
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CANADA, TO FORM A SOLID FRONT WITH THE PIONEER COUNTRIES,
THROUGH THE ENACTMENT OF PARALLEL LEGAL PROVISION."

2. STORIES IN OTHER PAPERS BASED ON WIRE SERVICE REPORTS.

2. OFFICIAL COMMENT INCLUDED JUNE 22 PRESS STATE-
MENT BY DAN HALPERIN, DIRECTOR OF THE CONOMIC WARFARE
AUTHORITY IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, THAT: "THE

SIGNING OF THE LAW AGAINST THE ARAB BOYCOTT BY PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER WAS A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ARAB BOYCOTT. THE LAW IN FACT GUARANTEES THAT AMERICAN FIRMS WILL CONDUCT BUSINESS WITH AND INVEST IN ISRAEL ON ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS ALONE AND NOT ON CONSIDERATIONS OF ARAB RETALIATORY MEASURES."

3. HALPERIN LATER TOLD GROUP OF AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN, AS REPORTED BY PRESS, THAT HE TOOK PARTICULAR SATISFACTION IN TWO ARGUMENTS ON WHICH PRESIDENT GROUNDED HIS SUPPORT OF ANTI-BOYCOTT BILL -- THAT THE ARAB BOYCOTT IS BASICALLY UN-AMERICAN AND THAT IT SEEKS TO STRIKE AT AMERICA'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL.

4. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT GOI OFFICIALS ARE ESPECIALLY PLEASED BY NEW U.S. LAW. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR BOYCOTT MATTERS STATED THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED WARM CONGRATULATIONS FOR THEIR "CONTRIBUTION TO PASSAGE OF THE NEW LAW." THEY NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THAT WEST EUROPEANS ARE ALSO MOVING IN DIRECTION OF ANTI-BOYCOTT LEGILATION.
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